

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

HA-05 IO-13 /086 W

-----032681 012002Z /13

R 312220Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7292

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 3478

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION: JULY

SUMMARY: THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS WHICH RESULTED IN ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS INCREASED IN JULY. DISTURBANCES CONTINUED ALMOST DAILY WITH A NUMBER OF DEAD AND WOUNDED RESULTING. IN ONE INCIDENT, AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL, GN DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL APPEAR TO HAVE LAPSED--PLACING MANY INNOCENT PERSONS IN JEOPARDY. THE ELEMENTS OF THE MEDIA, WHICH ARE MOST STRIDENTLY ANTI-SOMOZA, REMAIN TARGETS OF THE GON OR ITS SUPPORTERS. RADIO MI PREFERIDA REMAINS CLOSED AND THE OFFICES OF LA PRENSA WERE SHOT AT TWICE WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. IN ON-GOING EVENTS FROM THE PREVIOUS REPORT, ONLY LIMITED PROGRESS OCCURRED. END SUMMARY

1. DISTURBANCES: AFTER THE PERCEPTIBLE PROGRESS NOTED IN THE JUNE REPORT (MANAGUA 3087, JULY WAS A MONTH OF MORE THAN USUAL BLOOD-SHED. ON JULY 9, SIX DEMONSTRATORS WERE SHOT AND KILLED BY NATIONAL GUARD (GN) ELEMENTS AS THEY WERE BREAKING UP A DEMONSTRATION IN JINOTEPE (MANAGUA 3108). TWO DAYS LATER, REPORTS INDICATED TWO

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MORE SHOOTING DEATHS OCCURRED IN JINOTEPE AND FOUR DEATHS IN SAN MARCOS (MANAGUA 3124). ALTHOUGH ACCUSATIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY HAVE BEEN BANDIED ABOUT, TO DATE, NO DEFINITE VERSION HAS RESULTED AND THE PROMISED GN INVESTIGATION HAS NOT YET RESULTED IN ANY OFFICIAL FINDINGS. ADDITIONALLY, LA PRENSA REPORTED THAT ON 22 JULY, TWO YOUTHS (LATER IDENTIFIED BY THE FSLN AS MEMBERS OF THE FRENTW) WERE KILLED BY UNKNOWN CIVILIANS FROM A VEHICLE WITHOUT

LICENSE PLATES. TOTAL DEATHS IN THESE INCIDENTS: 14.

2. THROUGHOUT THE MONTH, STUDENT STRIKES IN THE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OCCURRED ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS. ORIGINALLY CALLED TO PROTEST NUMEROUS COMPLAINTS AND END ON 11 JULY, THE STRIKE HAS BEEN EXTENDED INDEFINITELY. THIS HAS PRESENTED FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONFRONTATION AS, IN SOME CASES, GN TROOPS HAVE EJECTED STUDENT STRIKERS AND THEN HAVE BEEN STATIONED INSIDE SCHOOLS TO PERMIT "NORMAL" FUNCTIONING. ALTHOUGH MANY STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AS A RESULT OF THE STRIKE, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DETAINED INDEFINITELY--OFTEN BEING RELEASED THE SAME DAY.

3. THE SIGNAL EVENT OF THE MONTH WAS THE INCIDENT AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL ON 20 JULY (MANAGUA 3311). DURING THE CONFUSION FOLLOWING THE ROCKET ATTACK, THE SON OF RESPECTED CONSERVATIVE LEADER, DR. EMILIO MONTALVAN ALVAREZ, WAS SHOT BY THE GN AND DIED. THIS TRAGEDY, WHICH HAS INDIRECT NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE (MANAGUA 3364), WHEN COUPLED WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ASSAULT BY GN TROOPS ON THE HOTEL FOLLOWING ROCKET FIRE FROM HOTEL WAS CONDUCTED AND RELATED EVENTS, EXEMPLIFIED A LACK OF DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSIONALISM ON THE PART OF AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS OF THE GN. THE GN HAS ANNOUNCED THE CAPTURE OF ONE PERSON ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED (MANAGUA 3363) IN THE ROCKET ATTACK.

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4. IN THE SAME COMMUNIQUE, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT CARLOS DONALD MAYORGA BERMUDEZ, SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE BRUTAL DEATH OF GN LIEUTENANT SOLIS IN MASAYA (MANAGUA 3228), WAS WOUNDED DURING HIS CAPTURE AND DIED WHILE ON THE OPERATING TABLE AT THE MILITARY HOSPITAL. (MANAGUA 3403), DURING THE PERIOD 21-24 JULY, A SERIES OF OTHER INCIDENTS OCCURRED THROUGHOUT NICARAGUA, RESULTING IN THE DEATHS OF FOUR CIVILIANS BY SHOOTING. DETAILS OF THE INCIDENTS ARE SKETCHY AND SUBJECT TO VARIOUS VERSIONS; BUT, AS YET, THE GN HAS NOT ACTED TO CLARIFY THEM. (MANAGUA 3403).

5. IN OTHER INCIDENTS, THE GN ITSELF WAS THE OBJECT OF SEVERAL VIOLENT ATTACKS DURING JULY. ON 12 JULY, A POLICE STATION IN MANAGUA WAS MACHINEGUNNED FROM A PASSING TAXI, WITH ONE GN MEMBER WOUNDED AS A RESULT (MANAGUA 3180). ON 15 JULY, A POLICE STATION IN CATARINA WAS ASSAULTED, WOUNDING ONE GN MEMBER. THE SAME NIGHT, IN MASAYA, GN LIEUTENANT SOLIS WAS BRUTALLY MURDERED (MANAGUA 3228). ON 22-23 JULY, TWO SMALL POLICE POSTS NEAR THE COSTA RICAN BORDER, EL CASTILLO AND LOS SABALOS, WERE ATTACKED BY FSLN ELEMENTS WITH A TOTAL OF ONE GN KILLED, TWO GN WOUNDED, ONE CIVILIAN KILLED AND FOURTEEN CIVILIANS WOUNDED (MANAGUA 3361). WHEN THESE INCIDENTS ARE ADDED TO THOSE OF PARAA 1-4, A TOTAL CASUALTY LIST BECOMES: GN KILLED -2, GN WOUNDED-2, CIVILIANS KILLED -21

(12 DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO ACTION OF THE GN), CIVILIANS
WOUNDED -14. (PROBABLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO FSLN)

6. TWO INCIDENTS INVOLVING AMCITS OCCURRED DURING JULY . ON 12 JULY, EDGARD JOSE BROWN, AGE 14, IN AN AFFIDAVIT BEFORE CONOFF, ALLEGED THAT A GN PATROL FORCIBLY TOOK HIM INTO CUSTODY AND BEAT HIM SEVERELY. EMB FILED NOTE WITH FORMIN PROTESTING INCIDENT (MANAGUA 3230). ON 24 JULY, ANTONIO AVILES, VACATIONING IN NICARAGUA ON LEAVE FROM THE U.S. ARMY, TOLD CONOFF, LABOFF, AND ADATT THAT THE PREVIOUS DAY, FOR NO APPARENT REASON, HE WAS ASSAULTED BY GN AUXILIARIES AND SHOT IN THE HAND. ALTHOUGH REPORT STEEMED FROM AMCIT, EMB SINCE LEARNED THAT INCIDENT WAS PURELY CRIMINAL WITH NO GN INVOLVEMENT. THIS INCIDENT SERVES TO POINT UP THE FACT THAT GN IS IMMEDIATELY AND UNFAIRLY BLAMED FOR MANY
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EVENTS TO WHICH IT IS NOT A PARTY.

7. PRESS FREEDOM: RADIO MI PREFERIDA REMAINS CLOSED AS A RESULT OF A 60-DAY SUSPENSION FOR BROADCASTING "FALSE AND ALARMIST REPORTS" (MANAGUA 2845). A HUNGER STRIKE PROTESTING ITS CLOSING AND OTHER ISSUES ENDED ON 8 JULY. THE OFFICES OF LA PRENSA WERE SHOT AT TWICE WITHIN A TWENTY-FOUR PERIOD, 16-17 JULY, AND RADIO MI PREFERIDA SUFFERED A SIMILAR ATTACK ON 17 JULY. LA PRENSA REPORTS THAT WEAPONS OF "HEAVY CALIBER" WERE USED. AS YET, THE GON HAS NOT CLARIFIED THESE EVENTS, ALTHOUGH LE PRENSA REPORTEDLY HAS GIVEN THE POLICE THE LICENSE NUMBER OF THE VEHICLE ALLEGEDLY USED IN THE INCIDENTS (MANAGUA 3273). ON 8 JULY, NOVEDADES REPORTED THAT A LIBERAL PARTY MOTION FOR REFORM OF THE RADIO AND TELEVISION CODE WAS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE AFTER LENGTHY DEBATE (MANAGUA 3128).

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-----032783 012001Z /13
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
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INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
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8. OTHER: ON 6 JULY, THE RESULTS OF THE GN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATHS IN FEBRUARY OF TWO NATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE ANNOUNCED (MANAGUA 962). THE GN DETERMINED THAT BECAUSE OF CONTRADICTORY EYE-WITNESS TESTIMONY, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHO FIRED THE FATAL SHOTS (MANAGUA 3170). IN TWO TRIALS, FSLN MEMBERS WERE ACQUITTED OF ALL CHARGES, THE MOST IMPORTANT WAS ON 1 JULY, WHEN A JURY IN MASAYA ABSOLVED NINE PERSONS OF CHARGES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE OCTOBER 1977 FSLN ATTACK ON THE MASAYA GN GARRISON. THE GON ACCEPTED THE VERDICT AND THE DETAINEES HAVE BEEN RELEASED (MANAGUA 3053).

9. IN TERMS OF ON-GOING ITEMS FROM THE JUNE REPORT (MANAGUA 3087), PROGRESS HAS BEEN MINIMAL. THE AMNESTY BILL REMAINS IN COMMITTEE. A COMMISSION OF JURISTS "OF RECOGNIZED MERIT", BUT ALL GON LOYALISTS, HAS BEEN NAMED TO ANALYZE THE STATUS OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE ASSASSINATION OF PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO CARDENAL (MANAGUA 3333). THE 27 JULY NOVEDADES CARRIES AN ARTICLE IN WHICH THE INVESTIGATING JUDGE REPORTS THE STATUS OF THE INVESTIGATION AND PROVIDES A LIST OF WITNESSES TO BE CALLED. NOTHING PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED IS FOUND IN THIS ARTICLE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A STATEMENT THAT THE HECHLER & KOCH 9MM PISTOL STOLEN
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IN THE U.S. WAS GIVEN TO SILVIO PENA BY PEDRO RAMOS. (COMMENT: THIS ALLEGATION, IF SUBSTANTIATED, LINKS RAMOS TO PENA, THE LEADER OF THE ASSASSINS EVEN MORE DEFINITELY. END COMMENT) THE CASE OF FATIMA GEORDY MORALES HAS YET TO BE CONCLUDED. THE REFORMS OF THE CONSTITUTION REGARDING ELECTORAL LAW WERE RETURNED BY SOMOZA TO CONGRESS ON 7 JULY. SOMOZA APPROVED THREE REFORMS AND, IN REJECTING THE OTHERS, SAID THAT THE BALANCE OF THE REFORMS SHOULD BE THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE GON AND THE OPPOSITION (MANAGUA 3128). ON 14 JULY, JOSE BENIFO ESCOBAR, SEC GEN OF THE FSLN, WAS KILLED BY ELEMENTS OF THE GN (MANAGUA 3217). AFTER SOME INITIAL SKEPTICISM REGARDING THE POSITIVENESS OF ESCOBAR'S IDENTIFICATION, THE BODY, WHICH HAD BEEN HASTILY BURIED BY THE GN, WAS EXHUMED AND IDENTIFIED AS ESCOBAR'S BY HIS WIFE.

10. COMMENT: THE MONTH OF JULY MADE EVERYONE MORE AWARE OF THE FAILINGS OF THE GN. DESPITE CONTINUING INDICATIONS OF GN RESTRAINT WHEN PROVOKED, THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL INCIDENT POINTS UP THE GN'S OVER-REACTION WHEN UNDER MAJOR ASSAULT. THE

FREEDOM OF THE FSLN MEMBERS--SOME OF WHOM IMMEDIATELY MADE PUBLIC DECLARATIONS OF CONTINUED ANTI-GON ACTIVITY-- BY THE MASAYA COURT, UNDOUBTEDLY INCREASES GN SUSPICIONS REGARDING CIVILIAN JUSTICE. AT THE SAME TIME, MAYORGA'S DEATH COULD BE REGARDED AS AN INDICATION OF INADEQUATE OR VENGEFUL TREATMENT OF AN ARRESTEE BY THE GN. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THE GN HAS NEVER EXPERIENCED SUCH WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION ACTIVISM. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT FSLN OR OTHER LEFTIST ELEMENTS ARE ATTEMPTING (WITH MAJOR SUCCESS) TO MANIPULATE THE VARIOUS PROTESTS AND DISTURBANCES IN ORDER TO CREATE CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE GN--OFTEN WITH POLITICALLY UNSOPHISTICATED CHILDREN OR YOUNG STUDENTS THROWING BOMBS OR STONES. WHILE THE GN IS UNDER ORDERS TO EXERCISE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT, THESE CONFRONTATIONS PROVIDE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF INNOCENT BYSTANDERS. ADDITIONALLY, THE GON AND ITS SUPPORTERS ARE INCREASINGLY THE

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OBJECTS OF PHYSICAL ATTACKS BY THE OPPOSITION. TO CITE ONLY ONE EXAMPLE, MINISTER OF ECONOMY, ROGER BLANDON'S HOME HAS BEEN BOMBED (MANAGUA 3180) AND, ON 27 JULY, MACHINEGUNNED--RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF THE GN ENLISTED MAN ON DUTY AT THE TIME, THUS MAKING A TOTAL OF 3 GN KILLED UP TO 27 JULY. THE POLARIZATION CONTINUES, WITH EACH SIDE INCREASINGLY SUSPICIOUS OF-, AND LESS WILLING TO BELIEVE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF ACCOMMODATION WITH, THE OTHER.
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Message Attributes

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